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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1585
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 2198
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 1623
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0093
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0083
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1834
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0378
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0312
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STATE FOR NEA/ELA (MGREGONIS), NEA/RA (JSHAUNFIELD AND
MCLLOUD), NEA/IPA (KFRELICH), AND OES
TEL AVIV FOR PROHRLICH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2019
TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [ENRG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [JO](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: GOJ MUDDIES THE FACTS TO PAINT A POSITIVE PICTURE
FOR JRSP WATER PROJECT

REF: A. A. AMMAN 1739
[1](#)B. B. TEL AVIV 1726
[1](#)C. C. JERUSALEM 1322
[1](#)D. D. STATE 78652
[1](#)E. E. AMMAN 1472
[1](#)F. F. AMMAN 1116

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C/NF) In an August 18 meeting with visiting Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) and the Ambassador, Minister of Water and Irrigation (MWI) Raed Abu Saud reiterated Jordan's commitment to implementing the Jordan Red Sea Development Project (JRSP) and noted that Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh is preparing a letter to Secretary Clinton seeking U.S. support. He continued his praise for the lead JRSP contractor Montgomery Watson Harza (MWH) and stated the GOJ had empowered MWH to lobby for JRSP support in Washington. Saud highlighted that one salient difference between the JRSP and the World Bank led Red Sea - Dead Sea Feasibility study (RDS) was that the JRSP would be private sector financed (reftels). However, when queried on JRSP funding progress, Saud flip-flopped and said the GOJ was also seeking "grants" which would help bring down the cost of JRSP water delivery.

[1](#)2. (C/NF) Recent reporting from reftels B and C reaffirms the Israeli and Palestinian commitment to the RDS and indicates their skepticism about the JRSP. Saud masterfully obfuscated the differences between the Jordan-only JRSP and the World Bank led RDS - noting only that the Israelis and Palestinians were committed to the concept of a "Red-Dead project." Saud stated that recent briefings by MWI and the World Bank had assuaged possible Egyptian and Saudi Arabian concerns about the "Red Dead project."

[1](#)3. (C/NF) Portraying it as a positive decision, Saud noted that MWH had chosen a northern Aqaba location for the proposed JRSP intake which would save 25 kilometers of water transportation and pipeline costs from southern Aqaba. The RDS has cautioned against this northern Aqaba intake location due to increased seismic and flooding risks. USAID sent a

letter to Saud on July 16 noting that its recent studies on safeguarding against future flooding in Aqaba revealed a requirement for a drainage corridor along the Jordan-Israel border which is now allocated for the JRSP intake. The letter pointed out that any alternate flood alleviation solution would be expensive to develop and maintain, while also subjecting the city of Aqaba and the Red Dead project to continuing flood risk. There has been no response on this letter from MWI to date.

¶4. (C/NF) Comment: To negate possible criticism or tough questioning, MWI continues to obfuscate on the difference between the JRSP and the RDS - in meetings as well as in public pronouncements. USG visitors seeking a status on these projects should ideally be briefed by the Department or Embassy Amman prior to their engagement with the GOJ. The latest developments further cement Post's recommendation to await the results of the RDS before taking a stance on the JRSP (ref E). End Comment.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman>
Beecroft